

# Healthy Aging Communication Network

## Living Stronger & Longer



## Older Adults and Heart Disease

### What is the magnitude of the problem?

In 2005, heart disease was the leading cause of death for people age 65 and older in Arizona resulting in 8,741 deaths for this age group. That is about one death every hour. The Arizona mortality rate for individuals less than 65 is 38.6 per 100,000 compared to 1,114.1 per 100,000 for those aged 65 and older. In other words, those 65+ are more than 25 times as likely to die from heart disease than those younger than 65.

### What is the cost?

According to the American Heart Association, heart disease will cost the nation about \$277.1 billion in health cost expenditures and loss of productivity (2007). In Arizona, there were a total of 122,293 hospitalizations due to cardiovascular diseases for 2005. The maximum expenditure for all hospitalizations related to diseases of the circulatory system was approximately \$4.2 billion. A median of \$20,414 was spent per hospitalization with an average length of stay of 4.5 days. Of these hospitalizations, around half (45%) were related to heart attack and heart failure. Hospitalization data are from state hospitals only; federal facilities (Veterans Affairs and Indian Health Services) are not included.

### Who is at risk?

Individual lifestyle behaviors and choices that put people at increased risk for heart disease and cardiovascular diseases in general include the following:

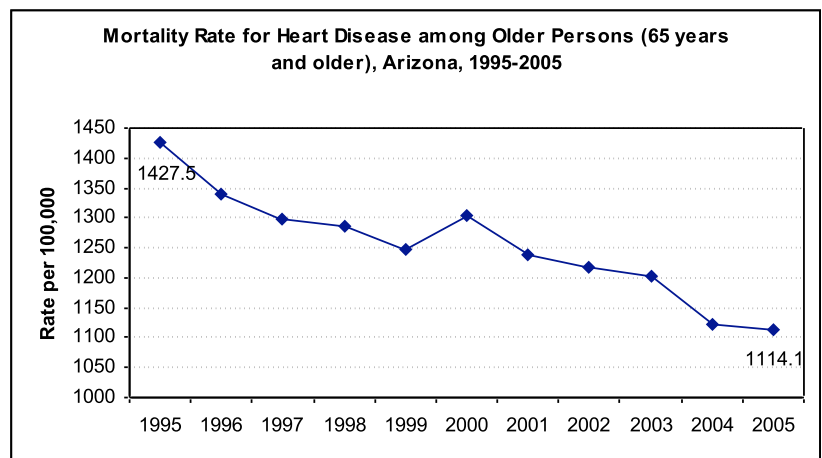
- High blood pressure and high cholesterol
- Tobacco use and heavy drinking
- Physical inactivity
- Poor nutrition and obesity
- Diabetes

### What will decrease the risk?

Begin to invest in personal health today. Choosing a healthy lifestyle will prevent or lessen the chances of heart disease and improve the overall quality of a person's life. For those living with chronic heart disease, good management of the disease is just as important. The following are ways to decrease the risk and/or manage heart disease.

- Yearly blood pressure and cholesterol screenings
- Smoking cessation
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Yearly flu shot and pneumococcal vaccine every five years
- Routine oral health exam every six months
- Reduced intake of saturated fat and salt
- At least five daily servings of fruits and vegetables
- At least thirty minutes of moderate physical activity every day

There are resources available to learn more about healthy lifestyles, heart disease or programs to support and promote healthy living.



To learn about Healthy Aging Arizona, please contact Ramona Rusinak at (602) 364-0526 or visit the Healthy Aging Arizona website at <http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/healthyagingarizona/index.htm>

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